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SUBJECT: USOSCE AMB FINLEY CONSULTS SPAIN ON ITS OSCE
CHAIRMANSHIP

MADRID 00003082 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: USOSCE Ambassador Finley discussed Spain's plans for its upcoming OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office with Spanish OSCE Task Force Director Lopez Jorrin and his team on December 15. Finley and Lopez Jorrin discussed the importance of focusing the next OSCE ministerial on a few key issues in order to make it more attractive for attending Ministers and to provide a clearer public understanding of OSCE's role. They agreed that Kazakhstan should demonstrate progress before it would be able to take the chairmanship. Finley explained that the US would stand firm on budget issues related to Georgia, Moldova, and the ODIHR proposal on tolerance, and that this might mean that the organization would not have a budget for several months. They also discussed Spain's focus on Central Asia, the need for strong leadership of OSCE missions, the dates for the next ministerial, and problems with the leadership of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Finally, Lopez Jorrin talked about his plans to visit Washington, as well as London and Moscow, as soon as possible. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) USOSCE Ambassador Julie Finley met on December 15 with Spanish OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office Task Force Director Ambassador Jose Angel Lopez Jorrin, OSCE unit director Jose Luis Lozano, Deputy Director General for North America Jose Moyano, and several members of the Task Force. She also met briefly with Director General for Europe and North American Jose Pons, who oversees OSCE policy.

-- THE NEXT OSCE MINISTERIAL: LESS IS MORE --

¶3. (C) Ambassador Finley and Lopez Jorrin agreed that, for the sake of the ministers and public consumption, "less is more" when it comes to OSCE Ministerials. Ambassador Finley said that the next Ministerial would be attended by and hold the attention of more ministers if it focused on three or four key decisions that merited their attention. Lopez Jorrin agreed, saying that fewer, more important issues would make the meeting more interesting and get better press coverage. He said that many Brussels Ministerial items were added to the agenda at the last minute even though they weren't ready for ministerial consideration. Lopez Jorrin said that Spain would consider setting a deadline for excluding items from the agenda, but noted, however, that the consensus decision making process would make it difficult to be firm on deadlines because some countries use delay as a negotiating tactic.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Finley said that she understood that the GOS had already made a number of key arrangements related to the Madrid Ministerial in 2007 and that it would be hard to

shift away from the November 29-30 dates that most countries supported. She said that she would talk with Washington to get a final decision as soon as possible so that planning could go forward. Lopez Jorrin confirmed that the GOS would hold the Madrid Ministerial at the IFEMA conference center, where it has held the October 2003 Iraq Donors' Conference, the 1997 NATO Summit, and other major events.

¶15. (C) They also discussed several smaller refinements to the Ministerial, such as changing the seating arrangement so that the same countries are not always next to each other, creating a bigger role for Partners' ministers, adding a ministers-only meeting, and replacing the dinner with a breakfast. Lopez Jorrin said that Foreign Minister Moratinos would be closely following the planning for the Ministerial.

-- THE PATH TO KAZAKHSTAN'S CHAIRMANSHIP --

¶16. (C) Ambassador Finley told Lopez Jorrin that the US sees little value in discussing Kazakhstan's 2009 chairmanship bid before the Madrid Ministerial or in reviewing its position before then. She said that Kazakhstan knows what actions the US believes that it needs to take to demonstrate commitment to human rights and democratic values, and that it is time to wait and see what Kazakhstan chooses to do. Lopez Jorrin said that while Spain's national position continues to favor Kazakhstan's chairmanship in 2009, Spain as Chairman-in-Office wants to avoid getting stuck on this issue. He said that Spain would agree not to bring the Kazakhstan question up for debate too early and would encourage the Kazakhs to show progress on democracy and human rights issues in hopes of demonstrating its readiness for 2009 or 2011. Ambassador Finley said that if President Nazarbayev started moving right away to get his Congress to pass a list of democratic reforms and then started implementing some of them, it might increase chances for approval.

MADRID 00003082 002.2 OF 002

¶17. (C) In response to questions from Deputy DG Moyano (who was recently Spanish DCM in Moscow) about whether withholding the chairmanship from Kazakhstan would push the country into Russia's arms or discourage the countries east of Vienna, Ambassador Finley said that Kazakhstan has lots of strong bilateral relationships, and said that the OSCE issue would not likely spill over into the bilateral relationships. She also raised the idea that an informal group of Nazarbayev's peers (former presidents such as Bush '41, Havel, Kwasniewski, Li Kwon Yu) could be arranged so that Nazerbayev would get encouragement from people whom he considered to be at his level.

-- BUDGET --

¶18. (C) Ambassador Finley said that the budget problems that Russia was causing had caught the US by surprise. She said that the US had been very accommodating last year, but would stand firm on several issues this year, possibly leading to a budget-less period. She said that the US was concerned about Russia-proposed cuts to the budgets for the Georgia and Moldova missions, as well the ODIHR proposal, which unacceptably diminishes the term "anti-Semitism." Lopez Jorrin said that Spain agreed with the US positions, but didn't see an obvious solution to the budget impasse. He acknowledged that the organization could probably continue for six months or so on the existing budget.

-- PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP --

¶19. (C) Ambassador Finley and Lopez-Jorrin agreed on the need to find a way to improve the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's work, which was often stymied by the Assembly's current leadership. Lopez-Jorrin said he was thinking about suggesting a three-way meeting among the leaders of the Parliamentary Assembly, the CiO, and the OSCE SYG.

-- FOCUS ON CENTRAL ASIA --

¶10. (C) Lopez Jorrin said that Spain would focus on environmental issues (soil erosion and water) within the second dimension and diversity and participation within a pluralistic society within the third dimension because western and eastern countries could participate equally in these discussions, without dividing the organization into "students and teachers." He said that Central Asia is a region of strategic importance that is overlooked within Spain, and that MFA would use Spain's OSCE Chairmanship to focus attention on the region. Ambassador Finley applauded this assessment, saying that she had recently increased USOSCE's engagement with this region by adding to her schedule a weekly meeting with five Central Asian ambassadors. Lopez Jorrin told Ambassador Finley that he would visit Central Asia in March.

¶11. (C) He said that MFA had already met with Roy Reeves, head of the OSCE Georgia Mission, and that Spain would be looking for ways to increase support to Reeves. Lopez Jorrin noted the recent meetings of the Minsk Group with Deputy FM Leon and said that if the Azerbaijan and Armenian presidents meet to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh situation, FM Moratinos would consider attending as OSCE Chairman. In general, he said that Spain would not interfere in the frozen conflicts, but would offer its support and assistance as requested by the key players.

-- SPANISH PLANS --

¶12. (C) Lopez Jorrin discussed FM Moratino's plan for a conference on intolerance against Muslims in May in Cordoba. He emphasized that Spain was coordinating closely with Romania regarding its conference, saying that Spain would adjust its plans according to the format of the Bucharest conference. Lopez Jorrin also reiterated that Spain will reappoint the three Personal Representatives. He asked for US support for Spanish efforts to provide better support to the Representatives.

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